

Chapter 17 Fuels Management

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Introduction

The Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) Programs within the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Forest Service (FS) have the purpose of reducing hazardous fuels (HF), and risks to human communities while improving the health of the land. To ensure these programs are coordinated, common priorities for fuel treatments have been established which follow these guidelines.

The DOI and FS along with other federal, state, tribal, and local partners will work to ensure effective HFR treatment efforts are collectively planned and implemented. These efforts will be consistent with the direction provided in:

- *Restoring Fire -Adapted Ecosystems on Federal Lands- A Cohesive Strategy - (Federal Cohesive Strategy)*
- *Western Governors Association - A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment - 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy*

Policy

The DOI and FS both use the following guides as policy.

Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (2008 Guide) provides standardized procedures, specifically associated with the planning and implementation of prescribed fire.

Some programmatic differences are identified in the following agency specific documentation and serve as agency specific direction.

- *BLM - Refer to (IM No. OF&A 2009-014)*
- *FWS - Refer to Fire Management Handbook*
- *NPS - Refer to RM 18*
- *FS - Refer to FSM 5140*

Policy, project planning and implementation priorities and standards common to all DOI and FS:

- The safety of firefighters and the public is the number one priority when planning and implementing HFR treatment projects.
- All HFR treatment projects will have plans that contain measurable objectives.
- All HFR treatment projects will comply with NEPA and all other regulatory requirements.
- All HFR management projects will be tracked and progress will be reported within required timeframes.
- All HFR treatment projects will be monitored to determine if treatment objectives were met and to document weather, fire behavior, fuels

1 information and smoke dispersion. Evaluation reports are to be completed
2 and maintained in the project file. All HF treatment projects will support
3 resource management objectives as identified in their agency specific Land
4 Use Plans.

5

6 **Reporting HFR Accomplishment**

7 The HF module of the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System
8 (NFPORS) has been developed and is the national interagency standard in DOI
9 for submitting proposed projects for approval, tracking accomplishments of the
10 program, reporting performance, measuring accomplishments and
11 accountability.

12

13 **DOI Policy Regarding Planned HF Treatments Burned in a Wildfire**

14 Acres burned in a wildfire may only be reported in NFPORS as prescribed fire if
15 all the following conditions are met:

- 16 • The area burned was in a pre-existing NFPORS treatment unit
- 17 • NEPA is complete
- 18 • The planned objectives were met
- 19 • The accomplishment is approved by a Regional Fuels Specialist

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21 FS provides direction for reporting accomplishment from unplanned ignitions in
22 the annual budget advice and by Washington Office interim direction letters.

23

24 **Prescribed Fire during Preparedness Levels 4 and 5**

25 Implementation of prescribed fires and approval at national preparedness Levels
26 4 and 5 is restricted. (See NFES 2092 *National Mobilization Guide* Sections
27 26.3.4 Preparedness Level 4 and 26.3.5 Preparedness Level 5)

28

29 **Federal Agencies Assistance**

30 It has long been the intent of congress that the, "Interior Agencies and Forest
31 Service should not charge each other for personnel and other resources" when
32 providing assistance in conducting hazardous fuel treatments.

33

34 The DOI agencies have agreed not to crossbill each other for fuels management
35 assistance. Assistance to or from the FS, unless arranged otherwise, requires a
36 local agreement, so that funds can be transferred between agencies. Informal
37 agreements may be made where assistance is provided on a "quid pro quo"
38 basis, where one agency provides assistance for another agency's project and
39 then in turn is the recipient of assistance from the other agency on a project of
40 their own.

41

42 Fuels management projects are considered regular planned land management
43 activities as opposed to emergency activities; therefore, offices have the right to
44 turn down requests from other offices to assist in fuels management activities.
45 Offices should not consider providing personnel and resources at the expense of

1 their own target accomplishments, and no office should be placed in a position
2 of subsidizing another office's fuels management activities.

3

4 **Hazard pay for Prescribed Fire Implementation**

5 Current policy is that hazard pay will not be paid for any prescribed fire. Under
6 certain circumstances, environmental differential may be warranted. Offices
7 should contact their servicing personnel office with specific questions.

- 8 • *FS - is proposing to allow hazard pay for prescribed fire, consequently, this*
9 *may change this year. If it does, this will not accurately reflect the current*
10 *policy.*

11

12 **Use of Contractors for Prescribed Fire Implementation**

13 Agencies can contract to conduct all or part of the planning and implementation
14 of prescribed fire operations and/or all or part of mechanical treatments for HFR
15 projects.

16

17 If a contractor is actively involved in igniting, holding, or mopping up an agency
18 prescribed fire, a Contracting Officer's Authorized Representative (COAR) or
19 Project Inspector (PI) will be on the site (exceptions can be made for late stage
20 mop up and patrol) to ensure that the burn objectives are being met and that the
21 terms of the contract are adhered to. The agency administrator and/or FMO will
22 determine the qualifications required for the agency representative (COAR or
23 PI).

24

25 **Use of Pay Plan for Casual Firefighters for the Hazardous Fuels Program**

26 Refer to the DOI Pay Plan for Emergency Workers for information regarding the
27 use of emergency workers for hazardous fuel reduction projects. Refer to the FS
28 Pay Plan for Emergency Workers for information regarding the use of
29 emergency workers for hazardous fuel reduction projects.

30

31 **Activation of Contingency Resources**

32 In the event an agency activates the contingency resources in their burn plan,
33 sending units should respond and support the requesting agency immediately, to
34 ensure that the public and firefighter safety are not compromised.